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Original style of ghazal needs to be preserved

THE ORIGINAL style of Ghazal singing needs to be preserved in face of the onslaught of the 'popular' style of Ghazal singing. A number of artistes have hogged the limelight by way of experimental singing. But the connoisseurs would still cherish those singers who maintain the touch of 'delicacy' and the shadow of the original 'Ragas' in their rendition.

The more famous style of Ghazal singing has come from the Patiyala Gharana which has spawned maestros like Mehadi Hasan, Ghulam Ali and Hussein Baksh, to name a few. They have given the genre a new touch also. Some of the legendary exponents like Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Nazakat Ali, Salamat Ali and Allahrakha Khan also belong to this gharana.

Incidentally, my father Ratan Chand Verma and my grand father Late Laxman Dada had also learn the nuances of classical music from the same gharana. Now, I am continuing the rare style of singing. For the last twenty years, I have maintained the original style without any sort of adulteration in over 7,000 stage shows. I have also made it a point not to repeat a particular ghazal in the next show. I search for new poetry (qulam) and a new tune as well, for every concert.

I am trying to pass on the baton to the new generation of ghazal singers, so that the original 'Layakari' (ups and downs), 'Talaffuz' (pronunciation) and the notes of Ragas can be preserved.

Ashwini Verma is an exponent of the Patiyala gharana and an 'A' grade ghazal artiste with the All India Radio

As told to HT Correspondent